The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Janet's Questions.

JANET! my little Janet!
You think me wise, I know;
And that when you sit and question,
With your eager face a-glow,
I can tell you all you ask me:
My child, it is not so.

I can tell my little Janet
Some things she well may prize;
I could tell her some whose wisdom
Would be foolish in her eyes;
There are things I would not tell her,
They are too sadly wise.

I can tell her of noble treasures,
Of wisdom stored of old;
To the chests where they are holden
I can give her keys of gold;
And as much as she can carry
She may take away untold.

But still her heart is opened,
Like the book upon her knee,
What is written in its pages
She cannot read or see:
Nor tell till the rose has blossomed
If red or white 'twill be.

And till life's book is opened
And read through every age,
Come questions, without answers,
Alike from child and sage;
Yet God himself is teaching
His children page by page.

I still am asking questions
With each new leaf I see;
To your new eyes, my Janet,
Yet more revealed may be.
You must ask of God the questions
I fail to answer thee.

School Board Religion.

In consequence of the submission to the London School Board of the following resolution:—"That the teachers of the Board be "informed that, when the religious instruction "for the day is given on passages from the "Bible which refer to Christ, the children are "to be distinctly taught that Christ is God and "such explanations of the doctrine of the Holy "Trinity are to be given as may be suited to "their capacities," what is called "the religious question" has been again forced upon the attention of the nation. As is the case with all acrimonious theological discussions, such as those that have taken place, the issues have become confused and need clear statement. Moreover many people, "of light and leading" are disposed to dismiss the whole affair as a mere squabble between rival sects. Vast interests are, however, at stake. It may or may not matter what creed a child is taught—personally I think *it is* a matter of large consequence—but apart from this, the cherishing of *religious reverence* is an essential part of a noble education; and how best to do *that* is a serious problem. The teaching profession is one of ever increasing influence and responsibility and anything that interferes with the spiritual independence of our teachers while it degrades them must react with injurious effect upon their scholars. Religious equality also is as much needed as equality in civil rights, to secure the free full growth of our people in all the higher qualities of their character.

By the Act of 1870, a "conscience clause" was established and it was decreed that "no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in the School." In the course of the debates on this limitation, it was stated by speakers on all sides of the House, that it would not prevent the teaching of *the dogmas contained in* catechisms and formularies. Lord R. Montagu, Mr. Henry Richard, Mr., now Sir, Osborne Morgan, representative men on both sides the House, found themselves on this point in agreement. Mr. Jacob Bright moved as an amendment "That in rate-supported schools in which the Scriptures were taught "the teaching shall not be used or directed in favour of or against the distinctive tenets of any religious denomination,"—but was defeated by a coalition between the Conservatives and the Government, 133 Liberals walking out of the House without voting, and 132 Liberals voting against the Government.

In opposing this amendment Sir Lyon, now Lord, Playfair, said "I defy any man to expound the Scriptures without stumbling against some man's religious views or some church tenets," and on this ground argued that undenominational teaching could not be enforced by law.

The Act of 1870, so far as the clauses affecting religious teaching are concerned, was thus based on no principle whatever. It was a compromise laden with every element of discord. The dogmatists believed that they had obtained liberty to teach dogmas; those advocates of "unsectarianism" (whatever that may mean) who voted with the Government believed that undogmatic instruction would ensue; while those who objected to the interference of the State with religion in the School as well as in the Church, stood aside in high disdain and ultimately brought about the well-known "Nonconformist Revolt," which prevented Mr. Forster from becoming the leader of the Liberal party.

The practical out-come of legislation has been that it has fallen to School Boards and teachers to decide what dogmas shall, or shall not, be taught in rate-supported schools, subject only to an appeal to the Department, whose decision is made by the Act final, and the results of this whole policy the London controversy has now prominently brought before the country for judgment.

The plan very generally adopted by School Boards has been this: to draw up a series of Bible lessons and leave the teachers to explain them, without giving any denfiite instructions as to the dogmas he is, or is not, to teach, while requiring generally that the provisions of the Act (which, as I have shown, are capable of receiving the most antagonistic interpretations) are to be observed, and the capacities of children considered.

The "London Compromise," as it is called, may be taken as a typical one. It requires that "in the schools provided by the Board the "Bible shall be read, and there shall be given "such explanations and such instructions there-"from in the principles of morality and religion "as are suited to the capacities of children."

In every direction, I contend, this compromise deserves condemnation.

It inflicts injustice alike upon those who are "Orthodox" and those who are "Heterodox" in theogolical opinion.

Those who regard the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement as essential parts of Christianity are not, cannot, and ought not to be satisfied unless those doctrines are taught. To teach these doctrines is to wrong those who conscientiously reject them; *not* to teach them is to outrage the consciences of those who believe in them. Dr. Dale expresses the opinion of many devout Christians when he writes: "A vague indefinite teaching which leaves it uncertain whether He (our Lord Jesus Christ) was merely human, or whether He was in a unique sense the Son of the Highest, is likely, in my judgment, to exert a pernicious influence on the whole future of the child's religious life." How can such men consent to the ignoring of their faith? How can Unitarians consent to its being enforced in schools which the whole community are taxed to support?

Moreover, to leave out orthodox doctrines is in effect to teach Unitarianism. Treat the life of Christ without giving a hint to the scholar that he is God as well as man; treat the death upon the cross without any reference to its being a sacrifice by which the sins of the world are expiated—and Unitarian Christianity will, of necessity, be inculcated. Unitarians

have no more right to claim that in public schools *their* gospel shall be taught, than Trinitarians have a right to claim the teaching of *their* gospel. The plea that Unitarian doctrines are unsectarian in the sense in which it has any relevance, contains a fallacy. They are "unsectarian" only in the sense that they are the common property of Christendom. All Christians believe that there is a God; that Christ as a man left us an example to follow; that love to God and man is required from all Christians; but Unitarians form a party or "sect" in being unable to add to these doctrines others, which the majority of Christians hold dear, as constituting the very innermost essence of their religion, and filling with new light and glory every "common" article of faith. Unitarians are, in my judgment, sectarian in their professed unsectarianism when they require that no doctrine shall be treated as essential to Christianity of which *they* do not approve.

But cannot—it may be asked—the Bible be taught in an "Unsectarian way?"

I reply that it is absolutely impossible. An honest teacher is bound to explain every passage he reads, according to his own idea of its meaning—and many teachers have many minds. Moreover, there is the great fundamental question as to whether the Bible is the infallible word of God, or contains amid its sublime teachings human superstitions and legends? Are such accounts as those given of the creation, the fall of man, the flood, true or not? Are the historical books accurate? Are the records of miraculous events reliable? If such questions are answered in the negative, thousands of the ratepayers to whom the schools belong, will raise conscientious objections; if they are answered in the affirmative, thousands of others will have an equal right to protest.

The compromise is subversive of the independence of the teachers.

How can this be, it will be urged; does it not give full liberty to the teacher to explain the Bible according to his own belief?

If a teacher in a public school gives religious instruction, without doubt he will, directly or indirectly, be subjected to a theological test. A thoroughly orthodox manager believes his creed of such transcendent importance that he cannot but esteem it a sacred duty to inquire whether it is to be taught or not, whenever religious instruction is given. The teacher may be asked no questions, but his creed will be found out, and if he is a heretic obstacles will be thrown in the way of his advancement. I am not giving merely an opinion; *I know that this takes place.*

A teacher's creed can be discovered, without any overt and open action. As Chairman of the Sub-Management Committee of the Birmingham Board, I could have filled the schools with Church of England teachers, without anyone suspecting that I was doing anything of the kind; clerical testimonials, archbishop's certificates, statements volunteered as to being "communicants," &c. (to which of course I did not pay the slightest attention), opened out to me ample sources of obtaining the fullest information had I chosen to seek for it. Throughout England I assert, without hesitation, that the teaching profession is being cruelly injured by the secret application of theological tests—consequent upon the "compromise"—by which the teachers are converted into "a new sacerdotal caste." A teacher in a public school should surely be as spiritually independent as a doctor, a lawyer, or professor; but if the managers are known (as in hundreds of cases they are) to require that one set of doctrines shall be taught, and he believes another, the whole of his professional prospects are endangered.

I am bound to add that if the teachers in rate-supported schools are to be the religious instructors of our people, some enquiry as to what religion they will teach, and how far they are prepared to teach religion at all, in my opinion, ought to be made. Incompetent and untrained teachers are not entrusted with the charge of writing, reading, arithmetic, science, music; is the teaching of religion so easy a task that any one who is fit for secular work can be relied upon to give it wisely and devoutly? Nay, may not an excellent secular teacher be, by opinion or faculty, unfitted for the duties of a religious teacher? How is this to be discovered, and if discovered, is he to receive no appointment to deal with subjects that he *can* undertake? School Boards can scarcely be regarded as authorities capable of selecting religious teachers for the children of our nation. If they are to discharge religious duties, some

test will have to be applied to them also; and as a matter of fact the "compromise" under which School Boards have been charged with the duty of providing instruction in the principles of religion, has introduced a demand for sectarian qualifications for its members; and sectarian School Boards always apply, either openly or secretly, sectarian tests to their teachers.

The religious training of children is injuriously affected by the compromise.

What is called religious instruction has, generally speaking, throughout the country, been resolved into Bible drill. The children are made to learn passages from the Bible as lessons, and are then examined in them. This is *not* religious training. By it the heart and conscience are not necessarily touched at all. Religion will exercise, I believe, infinitely more influence over children when removed from the task work of the school.

If a man is to be an effective religious teacher he must be free to pour out his soul Children note well alike reserve and indifference; they are most deeply impressed when they see the "whole man" flinging himself into his work. No limitations respecting the use of "catechisms or formularies" are consistent with the healthful freedom of a religious teacher. Religious teaching, if it is to do its perfect work, should be free from the restrictions of Acts of Parliament and School Board regulations.

By connecting religious education with Sunday school and church, the children are brought into living connection with religious agencies, far more emphatically and directly than they can by formal lessons.

Sunday schools and churches are not exerting their full strength, because responsibility is taken from them and put upon the day school. Let them feel that religious education is in their charge, thoroughly and completely; and a conviction of larger responsibilities will cause a corresponding extension of their efforts.

The arguments I have submitted lead in my judgment, to but one conclusion; leave secular instruction to School Boards; let religious instruction be provided voluntarily by those who believe in its inestimable value. This change is sometimes represented as an unfortunate necessity to which sectarian animosities may drive the nation, but which is to be avoided as long as possible by "compromise." I believe, however, that it would be fraught with unmixed blessings.

The life of our people is far more upbound with the development of our National Schools than those dwelling amidst prosperous and cultivated surroundings imagine. These schools have their standard of education kept at a lower level than it should be, through the theological interests which have become connected with them and dominate over them. Liberate National Schools from ecclesiastical control, and it would quicken their life as by the very breath of spring. The members of Schools Boards would be elected for educational reasons only and be unhampered in their work.

A great profession would no longer have theological conditions attached to its exercise; it would be opened for the entrance of men of all creeds; and no clergyman or dissenting minister or manager could interfere on sectarian grounds with the prospects of an honourable career.

The activity of churches and Sunday schools would be increased, and religious teaching, into which they could throw their whole minds and hearts, would be given by religious men and women in times and at places which could readily be arranged to meet the wants of the community.

The scholars would cease to look upon "religion" as a subject they have "to get up" and be examined in, but would learn to feel it as an inspiring power, bringing devoted friends to their side who in pure love seek to make known to them the commandments of their God.

Parents would no longer be insulted by a "conscience clause;" no part of the day school organisation being concerned with religion, any voluntary teaching could be accepted or not, as they might desire.

A happy day will it be for England when it is clearly seen how sadly theological influences are degrading national education, and how much nobler that education might be made were those influences diverted into better channels from a field in which their activity is only affecting disastrously both the culture and the religion of our nation.

HENRY W. CROSSKEY.

The Story of the Phœnix.

In Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*, in the last scene, where Cranmer foreshadows the glorious reign of Elizabeth, and carries on the prophecy to the period of her death and the reign of her successor—he likens her to the Phœnix bird, whose successor arose out of its own ashes. This is because Cranmer has to contemplate Elizabeth's life as a virgin, and her death without leaving any son or daughter, and yet wishes to express his knowledge or confidence that the succession will not be broken :

> In her days every man shall eat in safety
> Under his own vine what he plants, and sing
> The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours ;
> . . . . . .
> Nor shall this peace sleep with her ; but as when
> The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phœnix,
> Her ashes new create another heir
> As great in admiration as herself :
> So shall she leave her blessedness to one
> (When Heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness,)
> Who from the sacred ashes of her honour
> Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
> And so stand fixed.

What interests us here is the illustration of the Phœnix, and (though it may seem at first to be a licence of mixed figures) the incidental comparison of the bird's resurrection to the rising of a star. Shakespeare was well-read ; but how came his audiences to be so well instructed about the Phœnix as to appreciate his allusions ? They had doubtless seen it as a sign over chemists' shops, since it had long been employed as a symbol of the transformations and resurrections which alchemists declared themselves able to effect. One may see it still—an eagle or similar bird, rising up with flapping wings out of the embers of a dying fire. The story of the Phœnix is found in *Herodotus* (ii. 73), where the Father of History, after mentioning the fox-goose as sacred to the Nile, goes on to say,—"They have also another bird, called the Phœnix, which I myself have never seen, except in pictures. Indeed it is a great rarity, even in Egypt, only coming there (according to the accounts of the people of Heliopolis) once in 500 years, when the old Phœnix dies. Its size and appearance, if it is like the pictures, are as follows :—The plumage is partly red, partly golden, while the general make and size are almost exactly that of the eagle. They tell a story of what this bird does, which does not seem to me credible : that he comes all the way from Arabia, and brings the parent bird, all plastered over with myrrh, to the Temple of the Sun, and there buries the body," &c. But Herodotus does not begin at the beginning, nor give a complete story. We are told by Hor-apollo that when a Phœnix is about to die, he casts himself vehemently upon the ground, and is wounded by the blow, and from the ichor of the wound another Phœnix is born. The young bird carries its father to the City of the Sun, in Egypt, where it dies at the rising of the sun, and the priests bury it. According to another account, when a Phœnix has lived 500 years, it makes a nest of spices, burns itself to ashes, and comes forth with renewed life for another 500 years.

This resurrection of the Phœnix was so generally believed in, that Clement of Rome (a disciple of St. Peter's) uses it as an evidence of the power of God to raise up the saints. "Day and night manifest a resurrection to us," he says, for "the night lies down and the day arises ; again the day departs and the night comes on." He bids us again observe that the sower goes forth and casts seed upon the ground, and from its dissolution the Providence of the Lord raises it again and brings forth fruit. And then, as a third illustrative fact and type from the natural world, Clement brings forward the Phœnix. Of this bird, he says, there is never more than one at a time, and that lives 500 years. "And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it makes itself a nest of frankincense and myrrh and other spices, into which, when its time is fulfilled, it enters and dies ; but its flesh, putrifying, breeds a certain worm which, being nourished with the juice of the dead bird, brings forth feathers, and when it is grown to a perfect state, it takes up the nest in which the bones of its parent lie, and carries it from Arabia into Egypt, to a city called Heliopolis, and, flying in open day in the sight of all men, lays it upon the altar of the sun, and so returns from whence it came. The priests then search into the records of the

time, and find that it returned at the end of 500 years." Perhaps our first impulse is to laugh at the credulity of this early father of the Church, but probably very few of his early readers would do so. We live in days of enlightenment, when the ways of Nature are better known, and the line between fact and fable more rigorously drawn. We have no belief in "gorgons, hydras, and chimæras dire," nor in dragons, griffons, and sphinxes, any more than we have in jabberwocks and snarks. But we should remember that within two hundred years past educated Englishmen credited the existence of the Roc of Madagascar, a feathered biped, able to fly away with a horse. Clement was not more credulous than others in regarding the Phœnix story as a true tale.

It was asserted from time to time that the Phœnix bird had appeared again. It had been seen in Rome a year or two before the death of Tiberius Cæsar, or it had shown itself during the reign of Constantine. Pliny says that it was of the size of an eagle, with gold and purple wings and a blue tail. Perhaps Pliny had seen the Egyptian pictures of the bird. Pictures, however, prove nothing as to a creature's real existence, or else we should have to believe in the "Jub-jub Bird" of "Through the Looking-glass," and the Minotaur, or man-headed bull, pictured in frescoes found at Pompeii.

Minotaur, Chimæra, Pegasus, and Phœnix were all symbols in Greek mythology, and the Greek myths generally had an Egyptian origin. It is asserted by Mr. Le Page Renouf that the fable of the Phœnix, as told by the Greeks, is utterly unsupported by any Egyptian authority known to us. But there is the fact that Herodotus saw pictures of the bird in Egypt and was told the story there. The Phœnix was reported to have appeared in Egypt in the reign of Sesostris and at other times. There was also an Egyptian bird, called the Bennu, which served the Egyptians as an astronomical symbol. M. Naville tells us that in the oldest representation the Egyptian Phœnix has the head of a bat. The form may have changed, and more than one bird may have been employed to set forth in symbol the same idea or truth.

What was that idea or truth? It was in some way connected with the worship of the sun, or the worship in which the sun was another symbol. The Phœnix was said to die on the altar in the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis. This city and its Bennu-temple are expressly mentioned on Cleopatra's Needle, the obelisk now standing on the Thames Embarkment, but which was originally set up at On, by Thothmes III., about 250 years before the days of Moses.

The ancients taught in pictures and symbols, which were parables for the advantage of those whose senses and thoughts were awake. Let us try and guess this riddle of the Phœnix. What is signified by the long life of the bird? There were several birds that were said to have long lives when they were used as symbols. Ausonius, from Hesiod, computes the life of a man at 96 years; a crow, he says, lives nine times as long; a deer four times as long as a crow, a raven three times as long as a deer, the Phœnix ten times as long as a raven; and the hamadryades live ten times as long as the Phœnix. Josephus gives the life-time of the Phœnix as 600 years; and Tacitus, though telling us there was a concurrence of opinion in favour of 500, mentions that some writers gave the years as 1460, the length of the Sothiac Cycle. Now we are on the track. Sothis is Sirius or the Dog-star. Among the Egyptians sunrise was hailed with joy and celebrated with sacrifice, especially the sun-rise of their New Year's Day, which brought with it the rising of the Nile and the promise of fruitfulness. It was useful to know when the sun was near its rising, so as to get the sacrifice ready; and it was one of the chief duties of the priests to watch for the stars that heralded the dawn. It was the star Sirius which thus rose heliacally and at once gave notice of the rising of the New Year's sun and of the beginning of the inundation.

Having served this purpose once, the Dog-star would do so again the following year; and so on continually, if the year had been accurately measured. The priest-astronomers when they introduced the year of 365 days probably imagined at first that the calendar was perfect. But it was really still nearly six hours too short, and since they did not for

some great length of time introduce any leap-years, the calendar New Year's day got separated from the true beginning of the year. In the course of four years Sirius was one day behind, and in eight years it was two days behind, and so on, until in 365 times 4 years there would be 365 days' difference. But this was a whole year, and so the two New Years Days co-incided again, and Sirius once more heralded the dawn. Now 365 times 4 equal 1460; that is to say, 1461 years of 365 days are equal to 1460 years of 365¼ days; and 1460 years was a Phœnix period according to some writers. Others said 500 years or 600, because those periods were in use also as astronomical cycles. Pliny as well as Tacitus had learned that the life-time of the Phœnix related to "the great year," at the end of which the stars and seasons returned once more to their primal places. Of course there was only one such cycle at a time—only one Phœnix bird—and as soon as the old year died (the great year) a new year began.

The chief remaining mystery is why the cycle of time should be connected with a bird; but the answer to this part of the riddle also may be shrewdly guessed. In early times men recognised the renewal of the year by the return of the swallow, and the general phenomena of animal and vegetable life. Hesiod, for example, speaks of the annual cry of the crane as marking the time for ploughing and the winter season. Is it not possible that the Phœnix was, in the first instance, a migrating bird, whose return announced the beginning of the year? Afterwards when a star was found to do this more accurately, the name Phœnix would be transferred to the star. We still have, in the heavens, the constellation of the Eagle; and either some bright star in that constellation, or the star Sirius itself, may be the Phœnix, which announced the sun-rise of the New Year's day again at the end of a period of 500 years, or 1460 years.

Thus we obtain a reasonable explanation of that story which Herodotus could not credit; and at the same time we justify Shakespeare in bringing a bird and a star into the same similitude.

GEORGE ST. CLAIR.

"Our Point of View:"

A SERMON

BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

ROMANS XIV., 17.—*For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

What is our view of the church? How does a church justify its existence? The answer is simple,—in the need and principle of association. A Christian Church is not founded on external command; not because it is ordained in the New Testament are we to maintain church life. The reasons for it are inherent in human nature. Whenever men are deeply interested in a given subject, that common interest will bring them together in living and helpful association. Men who are fond of philosophical studies gather together into societies to stimulate each other's diligence; those who feel strongly about temperance, or funeral reform, or charity organization, or land nationalization, kindle themselves into ardour by forming themselves into societies. They are drawn out of solitude and seclusion into associated life, out of individual into federated action, because many can do in union what would be impossible for any number of units working alone. Faith, enthusiasm, and success are better insured by co-operation than by loneliness. It is only to be expected that the same law should obtain in religion. Man will not be alone in his religion; he seeks the strength which union gives. The church is built, not on any miraculous foundation, but on the great human necessity for fellowship. Men think they find the church commanded and the perfect church order given in the Bible. But the church rests on a surer basis: it rests on human nature. Given such a spiritual movement as that started by Jesus Christ, and the church was inevitable. See how it arose. Jesus comes and preaches the gospel of the Kingdom, manifesting the Perfect Life in loveliness of perfect deeds. After crowding a long life and immortal ministry into a short space of time, he is lifted up in the fulness of his self-sacrifice upon the cross. Towards his

light soul after soul is drawn out of darkness. At first it is all personal and individual: the word is to thee and to thee. It is the one lost sheep in the flock that the shepherd goes after. One by one men are called. The light passes by, and finds Zaccheus in his leafy covert. The light flashes and the woman at the well is convinced of sin and filled with shame. A voice is heard saying "Follow me," and Matthew leaves his seat of custom to obey, and Peter and John pull in over the blue waters of Galilee to listen to "a young man preaching in a boat."

And what followed? Just that which always follows when atoms are moved by the same magnetic impulse: the atoms rush together in magnetic communion. As the social instinct comes into play in connection with everything that deeply stirs us, so those early disciples, won to Jesus by the same attractive grace, moved by the same sympathies, are led spontaneously into fellowship, and into the creation of a society having for its aim mutual help and missionary work. Out of the crowd of individual disciples came the associated life of the church. The church, then, is founded on and thrives by the social principle. The Christian life is indeed individual, but it is also the life of a society; it is personal, but it is also collective. We are members of a body: each man is a distinct creation with a distinct destiny, nevertheless our religious life pines away without fellowship. It can never flourish except through the warm action of mind on mind and heart on heart. Without at all undervaluing private meditation, or the obligation resting on each man to be true to himself against the world; recognising also how much religion owes to lonely thinkers and solitary prophets and the courage of individuals, all experience teaches us that religion grows best in the intercourse of friendship, in the prosecution of common aims, in the reverent interchange of experiences, in the uniting offices of the church. The existence of the church is justified by the great need of association.

But this is true of all churches, and we have further to ask, What is it gives this particular church* and churches like it a special place in the great company of churches? What is the point of view of the churches to which we belong? What is our special contribution to the wealth of music in this great symphony? Each church that has shewn any vitality has, we may well believe, its own virtue, its own justification, in the witness it bears to some forgotten or neglected truth. Each too, it may be added, has its own error and weakness. We can see clearly that other churches have clustered around some great idea. The Baptist contends for ritual and principle,—for the rite of immersion and the sacred principle of individuality in religion. The Independent bears witness to the right of each congregation to manage its own affairs, and the truth that where two or three are gathered together in the sacred name there is a true church of Christ. The Episcopalian believes in a divinely ordained succession of pastors and teachers, without which there cannot be a church at all. The Presbyterian, on the other hand, exalts to the skies another form of church government. The Calvinists make much of the doctrine of God's sovereignty; while the Wesleyans delight to dwell on God's mercy. Further, while these churches are divided from each other by differences of opinion, ritual, and organization, they all alike insist upon the importance of dogmas without which they say a man cannot be a Christian. They are not perfectly at one as to these dogmas, but they unite in extolling the necessity of sound views on transcendental subjects. The dogmas they contend for, and which are necessary to salvation, are confessedly hard to understand; only men with special scholarship can discuss them; they pronounce on questions about which in the nature of things there can be no certainty; but they agree in exalting them into fundamental and necessary articles of faith, without which a man is denied the Christian name.

Has this church any such peculiarity? It has nothing of the sort. They greatly mistake the reason for the existence of the Liberal Christian churches of our land who think that their chief business is to contend for points of doctrine, or to bear witness for one view of the nature and being of God as against another. That is only an accident of their position. They

[*Preached at the Bicentary Service of the High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham.]

have a deeper and wider basis on which to build; they stand for something far nobler than for one opinion as against another. Your church 200 years ago was Trinitarian, but it was as much a Liberal church then as it is now; for it refused to identify the cause of religion with that of theology. It left the paths open. You have moved away from your fathers' opinions, and yet you are your fathers' children, because, like them, you witness to the truth that no opinions about which men dispute and which are matters of intellectual discernment only, are necessary to religion. Your fathers were opposed to church exclusiveness and a closed theology. They refused to say, If you quit the forms of Christian doctrine which we believe in you must leave us. They refused to fix a stereotyped character on their churches. They believed more in the bond of common spiritual affections than in agreement about certain opinions. This is where we stand to-day. The point of view for which we bear witness is not Unitarian, or any other "arian," doctrine, but for the truth that religion is over and above all opinion, whether Unitarian or Trinitarian; that religion is neither this ritual nor that, neither one form of church government nor another, neither your set of propositions about the being of God nor mine; but that religion is "Righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost." We do not exist to promote a scheme of doctrine, or a point of ritual, or a method of church organization. We exist to teach that none of these things are religion, and that none of them are necessary to it. "For the life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." In religion meat is opinion, and raiment is ritual; and our point of view constrains us to say that the life is ten thousand times more important than any of the meats with which you nourish it, and that the body is infinitely more beautiful than any raiment with which you adorn it. We do not despise opinions and observances. These are the things by which religion is often fed and clothed. But as life may be sustained and flourish with vigour under the most varied kinds of diet,—milk for babes, strong meat for men; rice for the Hindoo, fruit for the South Sea Islander, walnuts and cheese for the Italian, porridge for the Scotchman,—so may religion flourish under the most varied opinions and customs. Meat and drink are eminently useful, but they are not life, and they are not religion. Religion is not meat and drink; it is "Righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost." Religion is loyalty of heart to that which is seen and known to be the best; religion is love, and goodness, and sweet self-denial, a heart full of faith in the human soul and the divine mercy. It is an ennobled and purified spirit. It is a soul in possession of high principles of action, and a force of love which sets those principles in motion. It is to live as a child in the presence of God, to feel Him at every instant, to see Him in all the splendour and beauty of His creation, and daily to grow like Him. It is to hope and believe in men as Christ did. It is day by day to know that sin is perishing within, that goodness is growing, and to thrill ever more and more with the passion for righteousness. This is religion; this is fundamental, and this is the only fundamental.

Let us not be afraid of this free and broad basis for our church. I do not speak lightly of opinions and observances,—that is, of meat and drink. He would be a fool who said they were of no importance. It is often needful to contend about doctrines and methods, to take sides, and shew that truth is more with one view than another. But they are not life. Christianity is no more this or that opinion about the person of Christ than it is this or that ceremony. The Kingdom of God is not ceremonial meat and drink, useful as regular and decent observances are. The Kingdom of God is not ecclesiastical meat and drink, desirable as it is to organize Christian men into societies and churches. The Kingdom of God is not intellectual meat and drink, important as opinions are. The Kingdom of God is mercy, pity, peace, and love.

As churches we have this peculiarity. The other churches are struggling to gain more adequate recognition for this opinion or that. Our point of view is that saving faith is not belief in opinions at all, but loyalty of soul to whatever ideals of grace and truth have drawn us onward by their light, and that the vital

essence of Christianity consists not in any outward event, nor in the precise form of any intellectual dogma, but in the feelings it inspires, in the life it teaches, in the spiritual affections it quickens, in its brave faith in divine love and consciousness of divine communion. The vehement insistence of religious people on the inseparable connection between the letter and the spirit, between faith and opinion, between religion and dogma, has been the cause of infinite mischief. But our point of view is, that like precious faith may be found under endless varieties of opinions, and that great principles remain the same, whatever becomes of the dogmas and alleged facts which once supported them. If a man does but feel that God is with him and in him now ; if he knows by experience that prayer, as an act of divine communion, opens an unfailing fountain of refreshment, and solace, and strength ; if the larger and more blessed life which is ever pressing from the infinite into the realms of his narrow life appears always in the form of the grand Being who made the cross a throne ; what then does it matter that the audible voice of Sinai melts into the echo of earnest human thoughts ? Or even if the assertion of a unique and inconceivable miracle in the birth of Christ should appear to be the expression of emotions that struggled for utterance, rather than the record of historic fact ? none the less the ideal of grace and truth which he sees in the figure of Jesus now enthroned for ever in the gateways of eternity, holds him as by a spell, and loyalty to the best he now knows is not at all dependent on opinions as to the history or the dogma with which it is commonly associated.

Now, from all this there follow some suggestive considerations. I. This point of view does not separate us from, but brings us nearer to, all other churches. It enables us to recognize the presence and reality of religion in all the sects ; it enables us to be kind to men and churches who denounce us for our latitude ; it gives us sympathy with both believers and sceptics ; it makes us rejoice in the fact that, under whatever errors of opinion, Christ is preached and the Christian life is lived ; it enables us to witness without dismay the decay of old opinions, the disintegration of supernaturalism which is everywhere going on, since we know that the life is more than meat. It enables us to view quietly the competition of opinion which is raging in all the churches, since under all opinions men are loving, patient, Christ-like. Our point of view enables us to rejoice in the vitality of any church which nourishes the beautiful Christian life.

II. Our point of view sets us free to discuss opinions without any fear of consequences. We are not bound over to one conclusion because any other may mean the loss of salvation ; we are not committed or bribed to one view of truth because any other means our exclusion from the church. Nothing, no heretical opinions ; nobody, no pope, council, or synod, can exclude us from the church if we love God and man. And so we are free to be honest, and sincere, and sceptical, because religion is not bound up for one moment with our intellectual decisions. For the life is more than meat.

III. Our point of view gives us liberty to use whatever form, to adopt whatever raiment, we please, if it really shelters men and is helpful to the life of the spirit. Not believing that any forms are ordained, we are free to use or not to use them, just as we may find them serviceable or not. Why do I observe, for instance, the Lord's Supper ? Because I find it commanded in the New Testament ? Not at all. Because it has the sanction of universal usage ? Not at all. Because it has never been abused for superstitious purposes ? Not at all. I use it—I am free not to use it,—but I use it because I am free to use a beautiful symbol, which enables the soul to realize how Jesus was himself the bread of life, and held to parched lips the cup of salvation.

IV. Our point of view sets us free to concentrate all our energies on the promotion of justice, charity, goodness. We exist as a collective society, not to promote opinion, but to help on all the movements of our day that make for righteousness. And for this we are in a position most favourable, as the time and strength spent by others in ecclesiastical disputes or theological wrangling are ours to spend on practical work. We have not to turn aside to defend indefensible theological

positions ; we are not distracted by anxiety for any ark of orthodoxy. It is ours, above all men's, to throw ourselves, not simply with the ardour of individuals, but with the momentum of an army, into the warfare of good against evil. We are free to devote our whole strength as churches to the loosening of iniquitous bonds, the lifting of unjust burdens, and the bettering of human conditions. And surely as churches we, above all others, ought to be foremost in those larger movements of our time which seek the social salvation of men. More than any others the Liberal Christian churches exist to inaugurate and make possible a better world for men and women to live in. Greater than any desire to go from earth to heaven is our passion to bring heaven down to earth, and to set up the city of God here and now. Is it so ? Does church membership and church attendance wake us up to believe in a fairer social state than any the world has yet seen ? Is it natural for us to speak of righteousness, to denounce the cruelty of much of our economic and industrial creed, and to scheme for justice to the oppressed ? Does our religion make us believe that the poor shall not always be forsaken, and inspire us to work for human redemption ? Or are we content to walk in tame, smooth avenues, never challenging the world's opinion, never striking a blow for God or man ? It is for our churches to be leaders in the social enthusiasms of the day, enthusiasms which, rightly viewed, are none other than a large and rushing movement towards God. For we are members, not of any local, sectarian, or dogmatic church ; we are members of that wider, grander, diviner church, the church of humanity, and there ought to be in our hearts the fervour of those who believe in the fair brotherhood of men. Upon all that is dark this church of ours ought to break in with sweet and comfortable light. It is our duty, more binding on us than on anyone else, to assert the widening of the range of righteousness and the broadening of the scope of duty, to advance a new social order in which there shall be no work degrading in its conditions or inadequate in its reward. We who believe in a new heaven and a new earth here in time, may never pronounce the old sufficient, may never be contented with a partial equity, may never cease to sound the bugle of its true life in the ears of humanity.

If and Perhaps.

If every one were wise and sweet,
And every one were jolly ;
If every heart with gladness beat,
And none were melancholy ;
If none should grumble or complain,
And nobody should labour
In evil work, but each were fain
To love and help his neighbour,
Oh, what a happy world 'twould be
For you and me—for you and me.

And if, perhaps, we both should try
That glorious time to hurry ;
If you and I—just you and I—
Should laugh instead of worry ;
If we should grow—just you and I—
Kinder and sweet-hearted—
Perhaps in some near by-and-bye
That good time might get started.
Then what a happy world 'twould be
For you and me—for you and me.

THE RELATIONS OF THE WOMANLY TO THE MANLY NATURE, their different capacities of intellect or of virtue, seem never to have been yet estimated with entire consent. We hear of the "mission" and of the "rights" of woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission or rights of man ; as if she and her lord were creatures of independent kind, and of irreconcilable claim. This, at least, is wrong. And not less wrong—perhaps even more foolishly wrong—is the idea that woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre eminence of his fortitude. As if he could be helped effectively by a shadow or worthily by a slave. We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things Each has what the other has not : each completes the other, and is completed by the other : they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give.—JOHN RUSKIN.

Notes for Sunday School Lessons.

FROM WORDSWORTH.

I.—"MICHAEL."

In "Michael" we have a study of one of the fine old independent Cumberland shepherds; a man whose industry and unimpeachable character made him remarkable, and brought him honour among his neighbours. He possessed a small property of his own. It had been inherited. By his own hard toil he had freed it from a debt which his predecessors had incurred upon it. The poem presents him as already 84 years of age. It is now that great misfortune overtakes him. He has to pay away a sum of money which amounts to half his wealth to meet a claim upon him as surety for his nephew who has met with reverses. This leads to his son who, 18 years of age, had been his constant companion and delight, now "his comfort and his daily hope," for whom he really lived, leaving home to make a living elsewhere. Before he goes the father gets him to lay the first stone of a sheepfold which he had planned to build; it would be a kind of covenant between them. The boy would think of it if great temptation met him—the place, the moment, and the love of which it spoke, should be a divine strength to him. He goes, and for awhile all is well. The parents are glad, the father works at the fold. Then, giving way to evil habits, the son utterly disgraces himself and has to flee the country. The old man is broken-hearted. He will not show it. His ordinary duties are performed bravely as ever. But the sheepfold tells its tale.

> "Many and many a day he thither went,
> And never lifted up a single stone."

Though he wrought at it occasionally during seven years yet he—

> "Left the work unfinished when he died."

Lessons and suggestions:—1. A poor home which virtue and toil kept cheerful and beautiful. It was known by neighbours as "The Evening Star," because of the light which always shewed its inmates at work. 2. Beautiful before, a son made it more beautiful. He made life a different thing for his father. The "old man's heart seemed born again." So it should always be. Children can give unspeakable joy to their parents. 3. The awful change which sin makes. The home is utterly different. Sadness drives parents joy away. To the erring child it means degradation and shame; to parents unutterable pain. 4. The need to cherish all the love of home—to carry with us into other scenes and maintain all its holy memories and associations. Behind it there needs to be a very firm faith in God to keep us true to it.

II.—THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR.

"The class of beggars to which the old man belongs consisted of poor and mostly old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money but mostly in provisions"

Wordsworth's picture of the man—very old, very infirm, travelling about with painful slowness and alone, and awakening in the hearts of all—even the least susceptible—a certain sympathy and reverence. He does nothing but beg. Is he therefore useless? No, certainly not.

> "Be assured
> That least of all can aught—that ever moved
> The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
> Which man is born to—sink, howe'er depressed,
> So low as to be scorned without a sin."

The great lesson to us, or impression which the poem makes upon us, is the value of man as man. Neither age nor circumstances, as little feebleness and poverty, as vigour and wealth can affect that. Even sin, the grossest, cannot rob him of it.

But beyond that, or rather as rising from it, the poet traces some of the ways in which the old beggar is of use.

1. In him the country people see one to whom they used to be charitable long ago. And though, with advancing age and experience they have become more selfish, and involved in their own cares, they feel that they must give to him. It has become a custom. The habit of charity insensibly disposes the soul "to virtue and true

goodness." 2. He awakens in some, who afterwards are in various ways to lay their fellows under obligation,

"That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindness with a world
Where want and sorrow were."

3. In some the sight of him stirs thoughts of self-congratulation and thankfulness for their own better fortune, while others are moved to resolutions of prudence and economy lest they too should come to the same condition. The formation of careful habits in regard to money is no unimportant lesson. 4. He affords the opportunity for the exercise of our noblest nature in the help we give one another—even at the price of sacrifice—because we are brothers, because "man is dear to man." It is an unspeakable joy to

"Have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart."

For the beggar, one poor woman, hard-pressed by want, gladly found one "unsparing handful of meal." Should not all form the habit of supporting, if only in a small way, some cause or institution which is founded in love for man—a hospital, or a children's summer outing, or something of the kind?

ADDISON CHARLESWORTH.

Editorial Jottings.

Want of space compels us to omit two interesting letters on the question of an Extended Lectionary. One is from the Rev. Valentine Davis, of Liverpool, who takes exception to Mr. Snell's statement that "there is more of God in the Bible than in any other collection of books on earth," and who concludes "I simply record the experience that I have not always been able to find just the lesson I needed in the Bible, but then have found it elsewhere. I have found lessons in the Book of the Imitation of Christ, in Woolman's Journal, in poems of Whittier, in the Psalms and Litanies of Rowland Williams, not to mention other poets and devotional writers, which I should feel to be far more fit to be included within the Canon of Sacred Scriptures than much which the Bible actually contains." The Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans writes to point out that the difference between himself and Mr. Dean is not one of principle at all, but of method and expediency, and that what ministers have to consider in the matter of practice is not some doctrine concerning a Lectionary, but what will really and best build up the life and character of the people.

The conclusion of the whole matter appears to be the question "What will best answer the purposes of Religious Edification?"

For Unitarians and Liberal Christians there can be no other principle involved. If inspiration is not confined within the covers of a particular book then we are free to go elsewhere for our lessons, and to use the words of other than Hebrew prophets if they equally minister to Religion Edification. But do they? That is a question each minister must answer for himself in consultation with his own congregation. No rule can be laid down. One thing in this discussion has been made clear. We are all agreed about the value of the Bible. We are not agreed about the value of other writers. To one Walt Whitman is an aversion: to another an inspiration. Surely there ought to be some general consensus of opinion as to the religious value of particular writings before they are placed alongside the Bible in public worship. There are men who are deeply moved by the Hebrew Psalms, but to whom the Psalms of Rowland Williams seem stilted and artificial—a skilful mosaic but lacking in spontaneity. We are all in touch with the Sermon on the Mount: we are not all in touch with the Tripitaka or the Imitation All of which points to the need of the finest taste and the soundest judgment in the introduction of non-biblical writers to the reading desk.

The Twa Baubees.

Stately, lang-robit, an' steppin' at ease,
The rich men gaed up the temple ha';
Hasty, an' grippin' her twa baubees,
The widow cam' efter, booed and sma'.

Their goud rang lood as it fell, an' lay
Yallow an' glintin', bonnie an' braw;
But the fowk roon' the Maister h'ard him say
The puir body's baubees was mair nor it a'.

George Macdonald.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Work!

Whether would you rather play or work? I think I can guess your answer. "Play—play—play!" is it not? Well, I don't blame you for liking your play; but what say you about work, as well as play? Do you like it also? "No," says Tom, "I don't like these lessons about grammar,"—"Nor I," says Jack, "this arithmetic,"—"Nor I," says Jane, "this practising on the piano to learn music, or this stitch, stitch, stitching, to learn to sew,"—Nor I," says Mary, "this French lesson and these long pages of history." But you would all like to play, would you not? and to laugh, romp, sing, swing, and amuse yourselves all day long?—no lessons to learn, no one to find fault, or to trouble you—but just to enjoy yourselves in being idle, and doing whatever you pleased! Now I know your parents and masters have no objection that you should have your nice and happy games, because they love you; but for the very same reason they will make you work whether you like it or not. They know that, if you were allowed to grow up idle and ignorant, you would be both useless and miserable. But would it not be better, my young friends, if you *liked* your work, and did it with a good will? And why? Just because it is *right;* for it is given you by God, your Master and your Father, who also gives you all your play and enjoyment. Now, it is a delightful sight to see you enjoy your play heartily, and also to see you do your work heartily; but, oh! it is an ugly sight to see a boy or girl idle and lazy, hating their duty—to see them dragged to their lessons, as if it was a punishment—to see them sulky or sleepy over them, as if they said, "Although it is all for our own good, and although it pleases our parents and masters on earth, and our Father and Master in heaven, when we do our duty carefully and cheerfully, yet we hate it, and won't do it if we can help it." I say again that a lazy boy or girl is a sad spectacle, and no one can love or respect them, for they are selfish, disobedient, and useless.

Come and learn a lesson from this picture! See how that man bends his neck to his work, and how, with strong arms and steady eye, he guides his plough along the furrow! See these noble horses how they press forward, and put their whole strength to the plough, so that it moves on without a halt, and turns up the earth like brown waves. Look, too, at these wild sea-gulls that have left the white waves of that ocean which is breaking on the shore, and have fled far to gather their day's food from the dark waves of this furrowed field. See the black rooks that have come from their trees to join their white friends from the ocean, and are getting such a dinner as they have not tasted during the whole winter. How busy they all are! There is no idleness or laziness here! And what would become of us if every one was to become idle and sulky, and yawn, and get cross, and say, "Oh, I don't like work! I won't do it. I want fun, and nothing but fun!" Well, let us see how you would get on if everybody took this into their head.

You want shoes. "Oh," says every shoemaker, "we don't like working; and we won't make shoes. These children may go barefooted" You want clothes. "Oh," says every tailor, "we don't like work; and we won't cut clothes or stitch them. These children may go naked." You want a house. "Oh," says every mason, "we don't like work; and we won't build a house. These children may lie in the fields." You want bread. "I won't work," says the baker. "Then give us the flour!" you cry. "I won't work and grind it," says the miller. "Then give us the wheat!" "I won't work and thrash it," says the farmer. "Then give us the sheaves!" "We won't work and cut them down," say the reapers. "Oh, then, do get another field and sow some wheat for us, or we shall die of starvation!" cry the children. But neither the ploughman nor horses will work! They all wish to be idle, and to amuse themselves! What, now, is to become of us if every one resolves to be idle? Oh, children, I daresay you smile when you think how all the world would suffer and die if all became lazy, like some boys and girls I have seen, who say, "We don't like work, and we won't do it!"

Dear young readers, it is God's will that we should work! See how He works Himself! He has made everything you see on earth and in the sky, and it is He who takes care of all. See, too, how He has made everything to be useful, and nothing to be idle, and to live for itself alone. The sun is giving its heat and light to the world, and the clouds carry water and pour it in showers over the earth, and the earth brings forth its food for man and beast. "The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labour." (Eccles i. 5-8.) Every beast, and bird, and insect, too, is busy all the day, and some at night, in providing food for themselves or their young, or in making houses or nests for themselves. All the good people about whom you read in the Bible were busy and active in their work. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob travelled far, and worked hard as shepherds. Joseph was one of the busiest men in Egypt. Moses worked till he was one hundred and twenty years old. The Apostle Paul travelled and preached for thirty years, and supported himself and others by the labour of his hands, and it was he who said that, "if any man did not work, neither let him eat." And lastly, there is Jesus. He worked with his own hands as a carpenter at Nazareth. When he began to preach he went about doing good—night and day labouring for others. It was he who said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Children, we must learn to have the same spirit if we wish to be friends of Jesus and children of God. Boys and girls can know their duties just as well as other people, and they can please God, as the Prophets and Apostles, by doing well whatever work falls to their share.

Gleanings.

THE CATHEDRAL AND THE MOUSE.

A PARABLE.

In the quiet twilight I stepped into a great and glorious cathedral, and I looked at the wonderful pillars striving upwards to heaven, and my soul was lifted up to God. And I heard a rustling and nibbling noise, and saw a mouse running anxiously and greedily after some crumbs that it might eat. It sees not the beauty of the house in which it lives; it knows not to whose honour it is built; it has no eye for the bold structure of its roof.

And thou, O man, be not such a grey, hungry, greedy mouse in the grand cathedral of this world in which thou livest, and which proclaims the glory of God.

DEATH NOT A CURSE.

Looked at broadly (all the world over, and through all time) death is not a punishment—it is not a curse—it is not even a calamity; it is a blessing—the wise arrangement of a loving God. Were the laws of God, physical, mental, and spiritual, only understood and obeyed, we may believe that death would generally be just the simple cessation of the run-down mechanism of the body. The miseries, sorrows, and pains that afflict life, and accompany death — these are, indeed, curses, the results of sin, *i.e.*—law-breaking somewhere. But death itself is not a curse, neither is it the result of sin; it is simply that the clock has ceased to tick; that the case is closed, and the key handed over to the angel of the resurrection.

SUNRISE.

The world swings out toward the light,
And skies are growing clearer,
The gray of dawn is on the hills,
The golden glow draws nearer.
Forever when the night grows long,
And human moan ascendeth,
God-justice strikes the haughty wrong,
And his long-suffering endeth.
Since Calvary and Olivet,
There is no hopeless sorrow;
Wrong ever builds a tottering throne,
And Christ shall reign to-morrow.

SMALL THINGS.

The importance of small things has been pointed out by philosophers over and over again from Æsop downwards. "Great without small makes a bad wall," says a quaint Greek proverb. In an old Hindoo story Ammi says to his son, "Bring me a fruit of that tree and break it open. What is there? The son said, "Some small seeds." "Break one of them and what do you see?" "Nothing, my Lord." "My child," said Ammi, "Where you see nothing there dwells a mighty tree." It may almost be questioned whether anything can be truly called small.

"There is no great and no small
To the soul that maketh all;
And where it cometh all things are,
And it cometh everywhere."

CHEERFULNESS.

"Give me an honest laugher," Scott would say; and he himself laughed the heart's laugh. He had a kind word for everybody, and his kindness acted all round him like a contagion, dispelling the reserve and awe which his great name was calculated to inspire. "He'll come here," said the keeper of the ruins of Melrose Abbey to Washington Irving—"he'll come here sometimes, wi' great folks in his company, and the first I'll know of it is hearing his voice calling out, "Johnny, Johnny Bower!" And when I go out I'm sure to be greeted wi' a joke or a pleasant word. He'll stand and crack and laugh wi' me, just like an auld wife; and to think that of a man that has *such an awful knowledge of history!*"

HAPPINESS.

The idea has been transmitted from generation to generation that happiness is one large and precious stone—a single gem, so rare that only the very few and fortunate can possess it. It is not so. Happiness is a mosaic composed of many smaller stones; each taken apart and viewed singly may be of little value; but when all are grouped together, and judiciously combined and set, they form a pleasing and graceful whole—a costly jewel. Trample not under foot, then, the little pleasures which a kindly Providence scatters in the daily path, and which, in eager search after great and exciting joy, we are so apt to overlook.

News from the Field.

SHREWSBURY.—The Rev. E. Myers has had the good fortune to be vigorously attacked in a local newspaper. The attack was led by Mr. Jasper More, M.P., from the House of Commons. Mr. More claimed that any fair scheme for the Disendowment of the Welsh or English Church must apply also to Unitarian Chapels, such as the High Street Chapel, Shrewsbury. Not content with his warning to Unitarians against supporting Disendowment, Mr. More proceeds to show how unscriptural and irreligious these Unitarians are. There is no need to indicate Mr. More's argument. We are too familiar with it already. It will be sufficient to say that Mr. Myers has had no difficulty in replying to Mr. More and to the other orthodox champions who have rushed into print. The controversy, surely, ought to strengthen the Shrewsbury congregation. Even in the battle of texts, Mr. Myers has shown how little ground the orthodox believers have for their faith. Would it not be well to seize the opportunity; give the local public a good strong letter on the Inspiration of the Bible, and show what authority there is for these texts which are held to be so conclusive?

MIDLAND SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION. — The Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Midland Sunday School Association was held on Saturday, June 10th, at the Unitarian Chapel, Lye. The President, Rev. A. W. Timmis, presided. The business meeting was held in the afternoon, when reports were presented and adopted. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—President, Mr. Herbert E. Perry, Vice-Presidents, Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans and Mr. S. T. Cross, Secretary and Treasurer, Rev. T. Pipe. A resolution was passed according a hearty welcome to Rev. W. Harrison, who subsequently delivered an address. The company then adjourned for tea provided by the Lye friends. At the evening meeting a paper was read by Rev. A. A. Charlesworth. The paper dealt with the claims of the Sunday School on the Church, and the need for more devoted teachers. A discussion followed, in which Rev. O'Connor, F. Taylor, A. W. Worthington, A. Hopkins, and H. Winbury took part. A hearty vote of thanks to the Lye friends for entertaining the Association brought the proceedings to a close.

FAZELEY STREET MISSION.—The second Annual Floral Service was a complete success. In spite of chairs and forms in the aisles, accommodation could not be found for all who wished to join in the service. The chapel was prettily decorated with flowers. Friends from Evesham sent for the service a lovely contribution of flowers. Bunches were brought by old and young connected with the mission. Some had but two or three simple sprays brought from the market out of their few pence, but all were glad to add their mite to brighten the dingy walls. The children who took part in the services were all from the courts around the mission, and showed by their glad faces, how much they appreciated being surrounded, at least once a year, by the beauties of nature; while their bright singing and simple recitation preached a sermon all could understand, and few will forget.

LYE.—The Annual Sunday School Sermons were preached on Sunday, June 11th, in the afternoon by the Rev. J. C. Street, of Birmingham, and in the evening by the Rev. A. W. Timmis, of Stourbridge. The congregations were good, forms being placed in the aisles at the evening service. Amount collected £13 10s. 6d. Early in August the friends intend to hold a quiet little Sale of Work, one feature of which is to be a "Rummage Stall." Contributions for this stall of any kind of cast off clothing, furniture, or luxuries will be gladly received by Rev. I. Wrigley, Carless Green, near Stourbridge.

THE Presbyterians of America are much more thorough going in their orthodoxy than their brethren of Scotland. While Drs. Dods and Bruce remain honoured ministers and professors in Scotland, Dr. Briggs has just been deprived of all office, station and emolument in America. By a vote of 383 to 116, Dr. Briggs has been deposed from the ministry of the American Presbyterian Church. Dr. Briggs has published a book on "Inspiration," in which he freely accepts the position that the Bible is not without errors. This has brought upon him the wrath of his brethren, who have declared by a big vote that there are no errors in the Bible. If the ascertained facts of Biblical criticism do not square with this vote, so much the worse for the facts. After such a vote the discrepancies between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke will, no doubt, at once disappear. Meanwhile we cannot profess to be sorry for Dr. Briggs. It is just as well that he and men like him should be forced to face their position. There has been a little too much protestation of orthodoxy on the part of men who have given up the very foundation of half the orthodox doctrines, *i.e.*, the Infallibility of the Bible. We notice a tendency on the part of many English Liberals in Religion to try and run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. To claim the utmost freedom in Biblical criticism and at the same time to declare your continued orthodoxy is an impossible position for long. There are men in our midst who having renounced every theory of the Inspiration of the Bible which differentiates it from the Inspiration to be found in other great books, yet pose before the church as orthodox evangelicals. The sooner the position is made too hot for these men the better, and therefore we are not sorry for Dr. Briggs.

THE ANNIVERSARY SERVICES OF THE OLD MEETING CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOLS.—On Sunday, June 18th, these services were held at the church, when they were well attended. The church was decorated with beautiful plants and flowers, and the beautiful weather which prevailed helped in no small degree to make the services very impressive. The children, of course, attended in large numbers, and sang their hymns and responses with great credit to themselves and their teacher. The Rev. Wm. Copeland Bowie conducted the services both morning and evening in his usual able manner.

*** Notices for this page *must* be sent to the Rev. J. Crossley by the 20th of each month.

Midland Church Calendar for July.

ATHERSTONE: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. J. Howard, of Tamworth. Service at 3 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM: Church of the Messiah, Broad Street.
Ministers: Revs. Dr. Crosskey, 117, Gough Road; and James Crossley, 5, Wyndham Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Hurst Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. W. J. Clarke, 160, Pershore Road.
Services: 10-15, 2-45, and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Fazeley Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. T. Pipe, 59, Gt Brook Street. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Newhall-Hill Church.
Minister: Rev. A. A. Charlesworth, Claremont Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Old Meeting Church.
Minister: Rev. Joseph Wood, 120, Gough Road, Edgbaston. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

BIRMINGHAM: The Church of the Saviour.
Minister: The Rev. J. C. Street, 19, Charlotte Road, Edgbaston.
Services: 11 and 6-30.

BANBURY: Christ Church, Horsefair.
Minister: Rev. H. Hill, 5, Crouch Street. Service: Evening, 6-30.
Special:

COSELEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Henry Eachus. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special: July 2nd, Sunday School Sermons. Preachers: Rev. A. E. O'Connor (Morning and Evening), and Rev. L. G. H Crook (Afternoon).

CRADLEY: Netherend Chapel.
Minister: Rev. A. E. O'Connor. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

DUDLEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. A. H. Shelley. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

EVESHAM: Oak Street Meeting House.
Minister: Vacant. Services: 11 and 6-30.
Special:

Midland Church Calendar for July.—*(Continued.)*

KIDDERMINSTER :
Minister : Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans. Services : 10-30 and 6-30.
Special :

KINGSWOOD : Kingswood Chapel, Hollywood.
Minister : Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

OLDBURY : Unitarian Meeting House.
Minister : Rev. Henry McKean, The Dingle, Oldbury. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

SHREWSBURY : High Street Church.
Minister : Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S., Claremont Hill. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special : July 9th, The 103rd Sunday School Anniversary. Preacher : Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A.

STOURBRIDGE : Presbyterian Chapel.
Minister : Rev. A. W. Timmis. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

TAMWORTH : Cole Hill Chapel.
Minister : Rev. J. Howard, 17, Aldergate. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :

THE LYE : Unitarian Chapel.
Minister : Rev. I. Wrigley, B.A. Service : 6-30.
Special : July 23rd, Annual Floral Festival ; Afternoon, 3 ; Evening, 6-30.

WALSALL : Unitarian Free Church.
Minister : Rev. Peter Dean, 3, Sandwell Street. Services : 11-15 and 6-30.
Special :

WEST BROMWICH : Lodge Road Chapel.
Minister : Rev. John Harrison, Jesson Street. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special : July 9th, Sunday School Anniversary and Flower Service.

WHITCHURCH : Church of the Saviour, Highgate.
Minister : Rev. George Eyre Evans, 5, Mill Street.
Services : 11, 2-15 for Children, 6-30.
Special :

WOLVERHAMPTON : Unity Church, Snow Hill.
Minister : Rev. L G. Harris Crook, Oaklands Road. Services : 11 and 6-30.
Special :